



# Plan - in the Absence of an Appropriation

U.S. Geological Survey Contingency Plan  
January 2018

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is the Earth and natural science research bureau for the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the only integrated natural resources research agency in the Federal Government. The USGS's research and data products support the DOI's resource and land management needs, and also provide the water, biological, energy, and mineral resources information needed by other Federal, State, Tribal, and local government agencies. Emergency response organizations, natural resource managers, land use planners, and other customers use this information to protect lives and property and to make informed decisions based on the application of science.

The officials responsible for implementing and adjusting the plan to respond to the length of appropriations hiatus and changes in external circumstances are the Deputy Director Exercising the Authority of the Director, the Associate Director for Natural Hazards Exercising the Authority of the Deputy Director, and the Associate Director for Administration.

In the event there is a lapse in appropriation, the DOI will notify bureaus to begin an orderly shutdown of non-excepted operations. The USGS will suspend the majority of its activities with the exception of those functions to protect life and property. The USGS assumes the timeframe for this shutdown will be approximately 30 calendar days or 22 workdays. Should circumstances of the shutdown change, USGS will reassess its shutdown plan and activate the minimum number of employees necessary to protect life and property.

Attachment 1 is a summary of the number of employees in four categories: 1) number of employees who will shut down within a 4-6 hour window; 2) number of employees requiring up to 40 hours to shut down; 3) number and percentage of employees to be retained under this plan; and 4) the number of employees on call to respond to a natural disaster.

## Orderly Shutdown

In terms of the shutdown, the USGS is not differentiating between programs/employees funded by appropriated and/or reimbursable dollars due to the complex nature of our reimbursable portfolio. Most of our reimbursable funds are from other Federal sources and might not be a stable funding source given a shutdown. The USGS expects 100 percent of its workforce (8,032) to participate in the orderly shutdown process. The majority of the workforce can accomplish these activities within a 4-6 hour window which includes securing facilities, completing personnel and financial processes, cancelling meetings/events, and shutting down non-excepted IT operations.

Approximately 70 employees will require roughly 40 hours to complete the shutdown process including termination of scientific and/or laboratory projects, closing out existing sales orders in the USGS store, and the determination of and issuance of stop work orders and notifications to contractors and grantees supporting non-excepted activities. The USGS will issue furlough notices to all employees and process applicable pay records.



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### Retained Under This Plan

The USGS identified 75 employees needed for the protection of life and property to be retained in the event of a lapse in appropriation. Sufficient carryover is available to support the salary and benefit costs. Reimbursable funds will not be used for this purpose. These excepted duties will provide leadership and mission support of those operations *necessary to protect life and property*.

Where full-time services are not required, excepted employees will work only those hours required to respond to the situation. The National Earthquake Information Center (NEIC) and the Earth Resources Observation and Science Center (EROS) are two excepted activities where this will occur. The NEIC has identified less than one-half of its staff as excepted. Additional employees are on call as necessary to respond in the event of a natural disaster. EROS has identified the minimal necessary contingent to ensure 24-7 Mission Operation Center coverage to sustain computer support, antenna operations, and command and control of the LandSat satellites. This coverage is required to ensure Government direction in case of spacecraft or other system emergency (e.g. anomaly, predicted spacecraft collision, etc.) as well as protect the Government investment in the data sensors on board the spacecraft(s) by maintaining operation. This would enable the data to be collected and stored, to be processed in the event of an emergency (flooding, earthquake, landslide, fire) and/or when normal Government operations resume.

Contracting Officer Representatives are included where contract support has been deemed excepted and/or where the contract is obligated and is in support of excepted operations that are retained under this plan to avoid potential harm to life and/or property. The Contracting Officer Representative support will be as needed for oversight (and not necessarily full-time). The Contracting Officer Representatives are identified for EROS in conjunction with operations of the LandSat satellite (protection of property) and for enterprise information functions to support critical science information such as water streamgauge information for the National Weather Service, operations of earthquake and volcano monitoring networks, and other mission-critical activities.

Excepted employees may call others back to work to respond to a natural hazard or other emergency as needed. The USGS has approximately 450 employees that will be on-call for protection of life and property, especially response to a natural disaster for which the USGS is mandated to respond or assist in managing water, biological, geological, geographical, and other natural resources. Mostly, these personnel are at volcano observatories, geologic hazard science centers, water science centers, and the EROS Data Center, however they may include other personnel, such as support staff, depending upon the natural hazard event. The streamgauge network and related data processing systems can operate with little human involvement for short durations in the absence of major flooding, and the USGS has automated processes in place for flagging and prioritizing streamgauge malfunctions. If a malfunction arises, we will activate the minimum number of on-call employees necessary to respond to the situation. On-call employees will be deemed excepted when reporting for duty.

Additional on-call employees will be activated as needed to protect Federal assets at our laboratories and support animal care. They will work the hours necessary to protect property



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(including intellectual property) or sustain life. We would expect most of these activations, should they occur, to be intermittent. This protection of our federal assets also extends to ongoing experiments that cannot be stopped without irreversible harm to our scientific investments.



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Attachment 1

### SUMMARY

#### U.S. Geological Survey Contingency Plan

Number of employees	8,032 (as of January 8, 2018)
Number of employees expected to be on board before implementation of the plan	8,032
Number of employees that will shut down in 4-6 hours	7,887
Number of employees needed to shut down in less than 40 hours or 5 business days	70 (of the 70 employees -- 4 are Human Resource Specialists needed to issue furlough letters and assist with potential emergency hires; 25 are Contract and Grants specialists needed to issue stop work orders and notifications; the remaining are employees needed to shut down experiments and laboratories and closeout existing sales orders in the USGS store)
Total number of employees to be retained under the plan*	75
Percent of workforce retained under the plan	0.9%
Number of employees “on call” available (e.g., responders to a natural disaster; human resource expertise if emergency hires are needed, etc.)	450

\*All categorized as “those employees who are needed to protect life and property and are not otherwise excepted”